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John E. Fetzer and Theosophy

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Just as Spiritualism was the tradition most responsible for the spread of metaphysical ideas in the United States during the 19th century, so Theosophy played this role in the twentieth. Indeed, in many ways Theosophy has had an even greater influence than Spiritualism on this country's evolving metaphysical milieu. While membership in the various Theosophical groups in the U.S. has never been large, its ideas and teachings have had a tremendous impact on the ideological development of a wide variety of spiritual groups ranging from UFO religions to paganism to the New Age movement and beyond. Thus it is not surprising that John Fetzer should be influenced by it too, and in fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that one cannot hope to understand the evolution of Fetzer's worldview without a close appreciation of the unique role Theosophy played in it.

The Birth of Theosophy

In 1874, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), a Russian-born medium newly arrived in the US from Europe, met Colonel Henry Steele Olcott (1832-1907) while both were investigating spirit manifestations in Vermont. The pair soon found that, beyond Spiritualism, they shared an interest in the esoteric teachings of the religions of the world. The following year they founded the Theosophical Society in

New York City in order to pursue the unification of all religions through a recovery of ancient wisdom from East and West. The first fruit of the Theosophical Society was the publication of Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* (1877), the first part of which argues for an occult science to complement modern science, and the second part for the harmony between western spiritual monism and the esoteric teachings of Ancient India. The work was only partly Blavatsky's, for she made it clear that she had long been in contact with a number of spiritual masters or "mahatmas" who lived in Egypt and Tibet, members of the Great White Lodge or Brotherhood. It was they, she reported, who psychically conveyed the information that appeared in *Isis Unveiled*.

In 1879, Blavatsky and Olcott relocated the headquarters of the Theosophical Society to Adyar, India, in order to more adequately study the ancient texts of Hinduism and Buddhism. In time, this eventuated in Blavatsky's magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). Here again, with the psychic help of the Great White Brotherhood, Blavatsky synthesized western with eastern monism to create a grand cosmological scheme in which the human race was destined to evolve to higher levels of consciousness under the guidance of the Masters and through the action of karma and reincarnation. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, part of this process occurs on Earth, where mankind is in the process of evolving through seven "root races," the first two of which inhabited the legendary islands of Lemuria and Atlantis. *The Secret Doctrine* sparked much interest and controversy upon publication, and remains today

a spiritual classic for many metaphysical groups both inside and outside the Theosophical tradition.¹

Once Blavatsky and Olcott left the scene, the leadership of the Theosophical Society fell to Annie Besant (1847-1933), a noted British reformer and former Fabian socialist, and a one-time Anglican priest, Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854-1934). The leadership transition was not smooth, however. Personality conflicts between Besant and William Quan Judge (1851-1896), head of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, led to its breaking away to form The Theosophical Society in America. This organization eventually came under the charismatic leadership of Katherine Tingley (1847-1929), who renamed it the Universal Brotherhood and the Theosophical Society and made her headquarters on an elaborate estate at Pt. Loma, near San Diego, California. Once the spirit of schism was unleashed, more organizations followed: the Theosophical Society in America in New York, the Theosophical Society of New York, the United Lodge of Theosophists, the Temple of the People, the Blavatsky Association, the I Am Religious Activity, the Arcane School, and many, many others.

Meanwhile, Besant and Leadbetter consolidated their hold on the original Theosophical Society and despite defections, grew it into a global organization. According to Catherine Wessinger, “Besant and Leadbeater shifted Theosophy beyond belief in progressive evolution, which was taught by Blavatsky, to a

¹ Material in this and the following two paragraphs is from Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America* (1967), 92-119; Ellwood, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America* (1973), 74-78, 98-102; Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit* (2007), 270-83, 334-44; Olav and Rothstein (eds.), *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (2013), pp. 15-89. For a good review of the doctrines of Theosophy, see Ellwood, *Theosophy: A Modern Expression of the Wisdom of the Ages* (1986).

‘progressive millennialism,’ ... the expectation of an imminent transition to a collective salvation” signaled by the appearance of a messianic figure called the “World Teacher.” Leadbeater identified a young Indian boy, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), as the World Teacher, an identification ratified and “vigorously promoted by Besant.” Krishnamurti’s public rejection of this role in 1929 was a great blow to the Theosophical Society however, and damaged its leaders’ reputations and prestige, thus resulting in a decline in membership. Nevertheless, the organization survived and has remained influential. Indeed, the writings of Leadbeater especially have retained a standing well beyond the Theosophical Society: it was he who introduced the West to such ideas as chakra theory, the ability to read auras of the subtle body, and “thought forms,” and who popularized such practices as the psychic recovery of people’s past lives, astral travel, meditations, and yoga.

Theosophy in the Midwest

Despite Blavatsky’s and Olcott’s early removal to India in 1879, the Theosophical Society became firmly established in the United States. In the years that followed, Theosophical lodges were founded across the nation, including many in the Midwest—indeed, the American Branch of the Theosophical Society was officially created in Cincinnati in 1886. In addition to formal lodges, informal associations of Theosophists popped up throughout the region, especially where Spiritualist groups already existed. These included correspondence schools, such as the College of Universal Truth in Chicago and the College of Divine Metaphysics in Indianapolis, both offering courses in Theosophical subjects to those who wished to go beyond Spiritualism. In Ft. Wayne, Indiana, moreover, the Spiritualist Occult Science Society

was joined in the 1890s by a chapter of the American Branch of the Theosophical Society, and there were soon two more branches of the American Branch in Indianapolis and Bluffton. All told, there were some 25 Theosophical lodges in the Midwest during the 1890s, the largest and most active located in Cincinnati and Chicago.² Theosophy had followers in Michigan too: in the wake of Annie Besant's lecture tour in 1897, lodges of the American Branch were founded in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Jackson. After the turn of the century, the chartering of American Branch Theosophical lodges only accelerated in the state, with a total of six lodges in Detroit in alone, including the Finnish-language Sampo lodge in 1910 and an umbrella organization for the city known as the Detroit Theosophical Association created in 1919. Over the next decade, lodges were also gathered in Ann Arbor, Flint, Battle Creek, Sault Ste. Marie, Bay City, Lansing, and Kalamazoo.³

It was Chicago, however, that emerged as the center of Theosophy in the Midwest. In large part because of the excitement generated by the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, at which Theosophy was well represented by Annie Besant, G. N. Chakravarti, and William Quan Judge, that the tradition found an especially congenial home in Chicago.⁴ What's more, already the Midwest center for esoteric and

² Judah (1967), 81, 136; Buescher, *Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling* (2008); for the number of lodges, see *Supplement to the Theosophical Forum*, n.s. 2, no. 10 (1897): 1–11; for the national membership in 1926, see Gregory John Tillett, "Appendix 4: Membership of the Theosophical Society," in *Charles Webster Leadbeater 1854–1934: A Biographical Study* (accessed June 29, 2017, leadbeater.org/tillett/cwlapendix4.htm).

³ Janet Kerschner, "100 Year of Theosophy in Detroit," address for the centenary of Brotherhood Lodge, Detroit, MI (August 12, 2016); Records of Chartered Lodges, Archives, Theosophical Society of America, Wheaton, IL.

⁴ Ellwood (1973), 99; for more on the Parliament, see Ziolkowski (ed.), *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (1993).

occult book publishing, Chicago was also the location for the Theosophical Press, which evolved from the 1912 merger of two earlier Chicago-based presses, the Theosophical Book Concern and Theosophical Book Corporation, thus becoming the nation's largest producer of Theosophical materials. Interestingly, the demand for Theosophical literature was so high that an independent book store, the Chicago Theosophical Book Concern, opened for business in the 1930s and operated for several decades thereafter.⁵

Chicago also produced two personalities who would play extremely important roles in the development of the American Branch of the Theosophical Society: Weller Van Hook (1862-1933) and L. W. Rogers (1859-1947). Van Hook was a noted surgeon whose wife, Anna Van Hook, had become an ardent Theosophist in the wake of the 1893 Parliament. However, it was not until Dr. Van Hook heard the lectures of C. Jinarajadasa in 1904 that he too became a member, rising quickly in the organization to become the American Section's General Secretary in 1907. In addition, Van Hook edited several Theosophical journals including *The Theosophic Messenger*; created the Rajput Press in 1907 to circulate his and other writings on Theosophical issues; and in 1910, he founded the Karma and Reincarnation Legion, an organization designed specifically to popularize these two doctrines among the American public. So prominent did Van Weller become in the Theosophical Society, that his son, Hubert

⁵ Mills, *100 Years of Theosophy: A History of the Theosophical Society in America* (1987), pp. 44, 56-57, 82-84, 88 204.

Van Hook (1896-1957), was for a time considered by Annie Besant as the possible vehicle for the World Teacher before Leadbeater discovered Krishnamurti.⁶

Like Van Hook, Louis William Rogers came relatively late to Theosophy, joining the American Section of the Theosophical Society only in 1903. “L. W.”, as he was known, was a nationally-known labor activist who, after his “conversion,” turned his formidable skills as an organizer to the promotion of Theosophy in the U.S. As the American Section’s General Secretary and President from 1920-1931, Rogers organized dozens of new lodges throughout the country. He also sought to create a permanent headquarters for the Section, deciding that it should be established in a central location midway between New York and Hollywood, the two previous locations of the organization’s headquarters. The small town of Wheaton, Illinois, was chosen for this purpose, and in 1926, the Olcott Campus was officially inaugurated. Here, Rogers consolidated the administrative, publishing, educational, and archival branches of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. In 1943, the American Section of the Theosophical Society became the Theosophical Society in America (Adyar), by which name it is still known.⁷

Thus, by the first decades of the 20th century, it would be safe to say that the Midwest was no stranger to Theosophy, which has had a continued, if somewhat low key, presence in the region to the present day. Interesting to note is the range of prominent Midwestern figures who have been inspired by Theosophical ideas over the years, ranging from the inventor Thomas A. Edison to L. Frank Baum, author of

⁶ Mills (1987), pp. 41-46. For Hubert Van Hook, see entry on theosophy.wiki/en/Main_Page (accessed July 8, 2019).

⁷ Mills (1987), pp. 67-98.

the Wizard of Oz stories, to Henry A. Wallace, U. S. Vice President under F. D. R and a one-time presidential candidate.⁸ With the proviso that he never formally joined a Theosophical group, John E. Fetzer could also be added to this list.

Fetzer and Theosophy

So popular did Theosophy become in the Midwest that by the early 20th century it challenged the older Andrew-Jackson-Davis-inspired Spiritualism as the most popular metaphysical system in the region. Even in strongholds such as Indiana's Camp Chesterfield, Theosophical ideas became so prevalent that by the 1910s and 1920s, long-time camp secretary Mabel Riffle attempted unsuccessfully to ban the discussion of such Theosophical ideas as the Masters, spiritual evolution, and especially, reincarnation. It is entirely possible, then, that John Fetzer first encountered Theosophy at Camp Chesterfield, either through conversations with Theosophically inclined mediums or through materials purchased at the Camp's bookstore. Unfortunately, Fetzer himself never said exactly when he came within the Theosophical orbit, and any Theosophical books he may have purchased at Camp Chesterfield before 1960 have not come down to us in his personal library. What's more, we don't know whether John Fetzer ever read the foundational texts of Theosophy, Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* or *The Secret Doctrine* (although copies of the latter dating from the 1970s exist in the Fetzer Institute library). We do know that he read some of the chief authors of the second generation of Theosophists, Charles W. Leadbeater, C. Jinarajadasa, and Ernest Woods, but this wasn't until the 1960s and

⁸ For Edison, Baum, and Wallace, see the separate entries on theosophy.wiki/en/Main_Page (accessed July 8, 2019).

'70s.⁹ It appears, then, that Fetzer's earliest introduction to Theosophy that we can document came through the literature a Theosophical splinter group, the "I AM" Religious Activity of Chicago, Illinois.

The "I AM" Religious Activity

Four of the earliest Theosophical books still extant in Fetzer's personal library are the distinctive green leatherette-bound books of the "I AM" Religious Activity: *Unveiled Mysteries* ([1934] 1939), *The Magic Presence* (1935), *The "I AM" Discourses* (1935), and *Ascended Master Light* (1938).¹⁰ While all four volumes have John Fetzer's annotations, intriguingly, the first three volumes bear the signature of his half-sister, Harriet ("Hattie") Ribble. Although always a much more of a mainstream Christian than her half-brother, Hattie nevertheless was something of a seeker too, visiting fortunetellers and Spiritualists, not to mention maintaining a keen interest in her brother's spiritual development.¹¹ It is not surprising then that if Hattie happened onto a spiritual group that she thought would interest John, she would pass the materials on to him.

And what materials they were! The founders of the "I AM" Religious Activity were Guy and Edna Ballard. Throughout the 1910s and '20s, the Ballards were active

⁹ Leadbeater, *The Inner Life* Vol. 1 (1949); Jinarajadasa, *Theosophy and Reconstruction* (1919); Wood, *The Seven Rays* ([1925] 1967).

¹⁰ King, *Unveiled Mysteries* ([1934] 1939), *The Magic Presence* (1935), *The "I AM" Discourses* (1935) (1940), and *Ascended Master Light* (1938).

¹¹ FP 1 (Correspondence 1930 II): "Della Fetzer to John and Rhea Fetzer" (September 17, 1930) (R0213802); FP 1 (Research 1930 II): "Della Fetzer to John and Rhea Fetzer (September 25, 1930) (R0213802); FP 11 (Thomas, Harriett—Correspondence 1967-1984 I): "John E. Fetzer to Harriett ("Hattie") Thomas" (November 28, 1978) (R0214015); FP 11 (Harriett Thomas Correspondence 1967-1984 I): "Harriet ("Hattie") to John E. Fetzer" (no date) (R0214015); FP 11: (Harriett Thomas Correspondence 1967-1984 II): "Harriet ("Hattie") to John E. Fetzer" (no date) (R0214016); TB 13 (Research Material 1948 I): "Rhea Fetzer's Diary—1948" (February 24, 1948) (R0214472).

in Spiritualist and Theosophical circles in Chicago, where Edna taught music and worked in her brother's occult bookstore, The Philosopher's Nook, and Guy, who was a mining engineer by training, promoted his oil and mining interests. Guy Ballard's work often took him west, and beginning in 1928, he spent two years in California, landing first in Los Angeles where he continued studying Theosophy. At some point, according to Ballard, he was directed by a voice to travel to northern California to visit Mt. Shasta. On the slopes of that mountain, he reportedly met the mysterious Comte de St. Germain, an 18th-century Frenchman often cited in modern Rosicrucian and Theosophical literature. St. Germain explained to Ballard that he was an immortal "ascended Master" and representative of the "Great White Brotherhood," the divine hierarchy that ruled the destiny of the solar system. St. Germain was one of many such ascended Masters who, after an earthly existence, had returned and now dwelt in secret chambers in western mountains such as Mt. Shasta, the Grand Tetons, and the peaks of the Colorado Rockies. The Masters' mission was to reintroduce mankind to the "Mighty 'I AM' Presence," a boundless source of transformative spiritual energy radiating from God himself, the "Great Central Sun," which, when dwelling within each individual, was the "Christ Self." Once the "Mighty 'I AM' Presence" was made permanent, the earth would enter the Seventh Golden Age and humanity would be able to exercise stupendous powers simply through the medium of thought. Further, St. Germain told Ballard that America was destined to play a special role in this divine

drama, and that the Ballard family had been specially chosen to bring the “Ascended Master Light” to the nation as “accredited Messengers.”¹²

Once returned to Chicago, which St. Germain designated “the Permanent Atom at the heart of the world,” Guy and Edna Ballard, along with their son Donald, set about spreading the Mighty “I AM” Message by establishing the St. Germain Press and the St. Germain Foundation. Guy Ballard wrote up his experiences in two books, *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934) and *The Magic Presence* (1935), which he published under the pseudonym of Godfré Ray King. Meanwhile, both Edna and Guy Ballard began receiving psychic messages from St. Germain and a host of other ascended masters such as Jesus, the Archangel Michael, Sanat Kumara, the Tall Venusian (masters from other planets were commonplace in many varieties of Theosophy), the Goddess of Liberty, as well as Kuthumi and Morya (the last two were Blavatsky’s masters). These communications enjoined on mankind an endless series of decrees, affirmations, and invocations, which, if recited with conviction, would transform the world through the power of thought. The twelve volumes of these communications were supplemented by a monthly magazine, *The Voice of “I AM,”* and, beginning in 1937, regular radio broadcasts featuring both Guy and Edna Ballard. It is interesting to note that Fetzer’s radio station, WKZO, began broadcasting these programs in September 1939.¹³

¹² King, *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934), pp. 1-32, 42, 63, 67, 88, 92, 102-106, 114, 136, 242, 251-52, 260. Although it has its origins in Swedenborg, the Great Central Sun was popularized by Blavatsky’s *Isis Unveiled* (1877) 1892), e.g., pp. 29, 324 (here quoting Eliphas Lévi); John Fetzer also encountered the idea in Marie Corelli’s *A Romance of Two Worlds* (1886).

¹³ *The Voice of “I AM” 1939* ([1939] 2003): 7 (September 1939), p. 35; see also TB 12 (Research Material 1920-1944 VII): “WKZO Daily Broadcast Report” (June 12, 1940) [listing “I AM Religious Talk and Music (\$)” (R0214457)]. The association of the Archangel Michael with the dawning New Age seems to have started with the Renaissance Hermeticist, Trithemius, and popularized in the 19th-century by Eliphas Lévi (see McIntosh, *Eliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival* [1972], p. 151).

Meanwhile, the Ballards had undertaken a series of national tours, giving lectures and classes to widespread acclaim: one of their 1935 classes at Los Angeles filled the 6,000 seat Shrine Auditorium (the Ballards often made use of Masonic venues for their classes). Perhaps because of their phenomenal popularity, the Ballards by the 1930s had begun to attract negative attention by the press. Moreover, Guy Ballard's unexpected death in 1939 and Edna and Donald's conviction of mail fraud in 1942 hit the movement hard. The Ballards' conviction was eventually overturned in a landmark Supreme Court ruling in 1946, but the "I AM" Religious Activity (as it came to be called) never again enjoyed its early success, although the group survives to the present day. Nevertheless, as one historian of the movement, Robert Ellwood put it, "At its apex in the late thirties," the "I AM" Religious Activity "must have represented the greatest popular diffusion Theosophical concepts ever attained."¹⁴

Judging by the annotations, which are extensive, there was much in *Unveiled Mysteries* and *The Magic Presence* that interested Fetzer. On the one hand, many of the ideas resonated with concepts and scenarios that he was already familiar with in other guises. Both books read like the Tom Swift "boy inventor" adventure stories that John read in his youth, and he duly noted much of the technology described, whether plausible (radio, television, airships, and Tesla-like wireless lamps) or fanciful (machines to read the human aura, an atomic accelerator that cures disease by raising human vibration to the level of the "Pure Electronic Body," a telephone to

¹⁴ Bryan, *Psychic Dictatorship in America* (1940); Ellwood (1973), pp. 121-25; Robert Ellwood, "Making New Religions: The Mighty 'I AM'" (1988), pp. 18-23; *The History of the "I AM" Activity and Saint Germain Foundation* (2003), pp. 1-70.

other planets and beyond etc.). As for spiritual ideas, there were Hermetic elements in the books that Fetzer must have recognized. These included the mirroring of microcosm/macrocosm and the ascended masters' ability to control atomic structure to create vast supplies of gold and diamonds, wealth that only the Masters had power not to misuse (in fact, it was the dire psychic effects of the hoarding of gold, according to St. Germain, that caused the Great Depression: gold can only energize humanity if it circulates). Meanwhile, the idea that America was destined to play a sacred role in the ushering of the Golden Age of political and spiritual freedom was straight from Freemasonry, while the prediction that the Golden Age would be resisted by "the sinister force attempting to create chaos" and preceded by "extraordinary physical disturbances" must have echoed for Fetzer the apocalypticism of Seventh-day Adventism. Finally, the central role of Jesus Christ as the Master Jesus, the Great Cosmic Christ who first returned the "Mighty 'I AM' Presence" to humanity, must have appealed to Fetzer's still strong Christian piety, as did the presence of "Guardian-Angels" such as the Archangel Michael.¹⁵

On the other hand, the "I AM" books introduced Fetzer to a wealth of new Theosophical concepts, albeit in Ballard's own distinctive terminology: these included the "Etheric" (akashic) record in which every event is cosmically recorded

¹⁵ King, *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934), pp. 16, 42, 44, 47-48, 50-51, 55, 97, 138-39, 181, 192-93, 234, 251-52, 259; King, *The Magic Presence* (1935), pp. xii, 62-68, 75-79, 82-86, 90-91, 96, 134, 155, 178, 198, 279, 287, 304-305, 306, 321-22, 327-32, 356. Another similarity to Seventh-day Adventism was the prohibition of "narcotics, alcohol, meat, tobacco, excess sugar, salt, and strong coffee"; at one point Ballard is fed something called "sun-cereal" (King, *The Magic Presence* [1935], pp. 148, 326). For more references to alchemical themes underlined by Fetzer, see *Ascended Master Light* (1938), pp. 212-13. For more references to the sacred destiny of America underlined by Fetzer, see *Ascended Master Light* (1939): "Goddess of Liberty's Discourse," pp. 462ff. For more references underlined by Fetzer on Jesus's role as Ascended Master, see *The "I AM" Discourses* (1940), pp. 187-88, 202, 348-56.

and available for playback; “Projected Consciousness” (astral projection) through which human beings can travel out of body at will; and the body’s “seven ganglionic centers” (chakras) through which “Universal Substance” (*prana*), God’s radiating energy, is “channeled” by the body when, like a radio, it is correctly tuned. Additionally, the Blavatskian contention that the human race is far older than previously thought, stretching back to the inhabitants of Atlantis and Mu (a Pacific Ocean counterpart to Lemuria), formed a part of Ballard’s narrative. The idea of the remote antiquity of humanity was something that Fetzer came to believe implicitly. Karma and reincarnation also form prominent themes in the “I AM” material, with an emphasis on the distinctive notion of group reincarnation. Group reincarnation posits that groups of people work out a collective destiny by reincarnating together; relationships between the group may change, as may the sexes of the individuals, but none are released from the wheel of birth and death until all are successful in eliminating their karmic debt. As we shall see, this would have a great influence on Fetzer’s subsequent personal and professional relationships.¹⁶

In addition to dovetailing with parts of his existing worldview and to introducing him to Theosophical ideas, there is perhaps another reason why John Fetzer was so taken with the “I AM” materials. During the 1930s and ‘40s, Fetzer, after much hard work and sacrifice, was finally beginning to experience some financial success as a businessman. Wealth was now a real possibility. But how was Fetzer to

¹⁶ King, *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934), pp. 23, 33-39, 41, 75, 82, 85-85, 87, 91-96, 113, 122, 128, 166-67, 230, 233, 244, 254; King, *The Magic Presence* (1935), pp. 182, 353. According to Catherine L. Albanese (“Historical Imagination and Channeled Theology: Or, Learning the Law of Attraction” [2015]), *Unveiled Mysteries* is one of the first uses of the term channel in the New Age sense (pp. 481, 490).

fit the inherent materialism of wealth and business into his spiritual thinking? Both his childhood Methodism and the Seventh-day Adventism of his teens and twenties strongly warned against the temptations of wealth and the distractions of a life devoted solely to money getting. The “I AM” Religious Activity, however, saw business as an opportunity for spiritual growth and wealth as a sign of the Master’s favor.¹⁷ At one point, St. Germain tells Ballard (in passages triple underlined by Fetzer), “No one in the world ever accumulated a great amount of wealth, without the assistance and radiation of some Ascended Master,” and when they do, “Such an experience is a test and an opportunity to expand their Light.” To illustrate this, near the end of *Unveiled Mysteries*, Ballard used the “Mighty God-Power Within” to deftly conclude a lucrative mining deal, which then allowed him to convert all the parties to the “Great Cosmic Laws of Life,” love, harmony, perfection, and service to humanity. Significantly, unbeknownst to Ballard, he was then being tested by the Great White Brotherhood, and having passed with flying colors, he was initiated as their Accredited Messenger.¹⁸ In *The Magic Presence*, another model of a successful businessman aided by the Masters is presented in the person of the fabulously wealthy Daniel Rayborn, whom Ballard meets at his opulent ranch house in Wyoming. Of him Ballard remarked, “I never ceased to marvel at the power of Love to bless men and their business, when they really accept and live it,” adding, “Rayborn was a living proof of its efficacy and wisdom, in the practical daily experience of the business world.” Eventually, after a lifetime of discrete philanthropy and service, Rayborn himself is

¹⁷ Albanese (2015), p. 489.

¹⁸ King, *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934), pp. 88-89, 215-42. See also *The “I AM” Discourses* (1940), pp. 106-107 for similar discussions of wealth underlined by Fetzer.

allowed to become an Ascended Master, servant of the Great White Brotherhood.¹⁹ While it is impossible to know how literally Fetzer took these narratives, the idea that business and wealth could be spiritually uplifting if used for love and service appealed to him greatly.

John Fetzer is a good example of Ellwood's assertion above that the "I AM" movement was the most effective popularizer of Theosophical ideas during the 1930s. After reading the "I AM" materials, which were apparently the earliest Theosophical materials Fetzer encountered, he was hooked. For the rest of his life, Fetzer would seek out different iterations of the Theosophical worldview. He avidly read and annotated the books that inspired the "I AM" Religious Activity (for example, *A Dweller on Two Planets* by Phyllos the Tibetan and *The Impersonal Life* by Joseph Benner), as well as those that were inspired by it (for example, the four *Books of Azrael: Teachings of the Great White Brotherhood*, which, judging by a bookplate, he bought at Camp Chesterfield in the 1960s). He also came into contact with another "I AM" offshoot, the Magnificent Consummation of the Ruby Focus, an Arizona group that claimed Nikola Tesla as an Ascended Master.²⁰ In terms of other non-"I AM" versions of Theosophy, Fetzer also diligently made his way through the four dense volumes of the *Harmonics of Evolution* by Chicago-based Theosophist Florence Huntley, as well as Nancy Fullwood's *Song of the Sano Tarot* and Vera Stanley Alder's *The Initiation of the World* (this last was significant for Fetzer because of its chapter

¹⁹ King, *The Magic Presence* (1935), pp. 1-3, 175, 265-89.

²⁰ Tesla, "The Why and Wherefore of the Treasure Box in Heaven" (1974). This pamphlet is paper clipped to the inside cover of Fetzer's copy of Tuella, *World Messages for the Coming Decade: A Cosmic Symposium* (1981).

on the theory and technology of energy healing, a subject that would become a vital interest of his in later life). Fetzer was especially captivated by Theosophical stories of ancient civilizations such as Lemuria and Atlantis and their connections to Ancient Egypt, and so it is not surprising that we find in Fetzer's collection W. P. Phelon's *Our Story of Atlantis*, Edgar Cayce's *Edgar Cayce on Atlantis*, and Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret Egypt*.²¹ Indeed, Fetzer looked forward to the time in the future when underwater cameras would provide irrefutable evidence of this "previous modern civilization" now "at the bottom of the sea."²²

Alice Bailey and the Arcane School

From all his later reading on Theosophy, there are two writers that stand out in terms of their impact on Fetzer's later thinking: Alice Bailey and Baird T. Spalding. Alice Bailey died in 1949, and John Fetzer apparently encountered her thought by reading *The Unfinished Autobiography*, most likely shortly after its publication in

²¹ Phyllos the Tibetan, *A Dweller on Two Planets* ([1905] 1952); the "sequel," *An Earth Dweller's Return* ([1940] 1969) was also extensively annotated by Fetzer; Benner, *The Impersonal Life* ([1914] 1974); yet another book that inspired the "I AM" Religious Activity with Fetzer markings is Carver, *Brother of the Third Degree* ([1894] 1964), purchased through Association Sanada and Sanat Kumara (A. S. S. K.), Mt. Shasta, CA. In addition to the four heavily marked volumes of the anonymous *Books of Azrael: Teachings of the Great White Brotherhood* (1960?, 1961, 1964, 1967), other "I AM" inspired books in Fetzer's collection include Brother Philip, *Brotherhood of the Seven Rays: Secret of the Andes* (1961) and Whitfield, *The Treasure of El Dorado* ([1971] 1980), purchased through A. S. S. K., Mt. Shasta, CA. Other Theosophically influenced books with markings are Huntley, *Harmonics of Evolution*, volume I (1956), Fullwood, *Song of the Sano Tarot* ([1929] 1946), which was purchased at the Chicago Theosophical Book Concern; Alder, *The Initiation of the World* ([1939] 1957); Tuella, *World Messages for the Coming Decade* (1981), purchased through A. S. S. K., Mt. Shasta, California.; Phelon, *Our Story of Atlantis* (1937); Cayce, *Edgar Cayce on Atlantis* (1967); Brunton, *A Search in Secret Egypt* ([1936] 1959). Tom Beaver reports that he and Fetzer also read Anrias, *Through the Eyes of the Masters: Meditations and Portraits* (1932), although the book doesn't survive in Fetzer's personal library (personal communication [October 5, 2016]).

²² Fetzer, *One Man's Family* (1964), p. 192. See also his remarks on the lessons of Atlantis for today in "Fetzer Interview" (FI 6 [Fetzer, John E. Interview Transcript] [R0213070]); FI 9 (Institute of Noetic Sciences 1981): "John E. Fetzer to W. W. Harman" (October 26, 1981) (R0213170); Judy Skutch Whitson Oral History (March 30, 2011), pp. 52-53.

1951.²³ Alice Bailey was born into a wealthy English family in 1880. As a young woman, she became a conservative Christian and spent time in India as a missionary with the YWCA. After marrying in 1907, she moved with her husband to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he studied for the ministry in the Episcopal Church, after which they settled for a time in Pacific Grove, California. Later separated from her husband, she rejected her conservative Christian roots and became attracted to the Theosophical Society in 1915; two years she later moved to their headquarters in Hollywood, where she met and eventually married Foster Bailey. Judging by his annotations, Fetzer identified with Bailey's transition out of conservative Christianity, underlining passages in the book in which she talked about how she had come to realize the futility of a literalist interpretation of the Bible in favor of more of an universalist understanding of the scriptures and the role of Christ. Indeed, like Fetzer, far from giving up her childhood Christian pietism, it remained an indelible part of Bailey's evolving worldview, albeit integrated with such things as reincarnation, the religions of the East, and the spiritual hierarchy of the Masters.²⁴

As with the "I AM" materials, Fetzer was fascinated by Bailey's encounters with the Masters. Alice Bailey claimed that as child of 15, she had met a mysterious turbaned stranger who had told her she had a special mission in the world. She had interpreted this at first to be a Christian mission, but upon joining the Theosophical society, she saw a picture depicting Kuthumi, one of Blavatsky's mahatmas, and

²³ Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography of Alice A. Bailey* (1951). For Fetzer's underlined passages, see pp. 35-38, 51-55, 72, 89, 142, 155, 162-68, 171, 254-58. The Bailey books were available at Camp Chesterfield, so Fetzer may have first encountered them there (the author has in his possession a copy of Bailey's *Discipleship in the New Age* [1954 printing] with a Psychic Observer Book Shop, Chesterfield, Indiana, U.S.A. book plate).

²⁴ For Fetzer's underlined passages, see Bailey (1951), pp. 40-41, 72, 142, 237-40, 288, 299.

recognized him as the man she had met years before. Bailey was contacted soon after by another Master, Djwhal Khul (“the Tibetan”), who enlisted her aid in channeling a series of books, the first of which was *Initiation Human and Solar*. The following year, Alice and Foster Bailey left the Theosophical Society because of Alice’s unauthorized channelings, after which the couple relocated to New York City where they founded the Lucis Trust and the Arcane School. While retaining many Theosophical ideas, the key teaching of the Bailey’s Arcane School is the imminent inauguration of the New Age through the Second Coming of Christ, also identified as Maitreya, the bodhisattva and world teacher prominent in many sects of Buddhism. According to Bailey, human beings must prepare the way for the New Age and the world freedom that will characterize it, by projecting spiritual energy into the planet and all its peoples. To this end, the Arcane School created the Triangles Program (1937), which encouraged the formation of small meditation groups, typically groups of three (“triangles”) to act as “points of light” to channel energy by chanting the “Great Invocation” during the full moon of each month. Fetzer was intrigued by the idea of small meditation groups for esoteric study and was impressed by how Alice and Foster Bailey had used their initial meditation group to develop the Arcane School and the Lucis Foundation into prominent organizations. Moreover, the “Great Invocation” became a favorite of Fetzer’s, reproduced in later writings and recommended to many friends.²⁵

<u>The Great Invocation</u>

²⁵ For Fetzer’s underlined passages, see Bailey (1951), pp. 39, 169, 191, 193, 194, 213, 239, 252, 305. See also Ellwood (1973), 103-106; Melton, *New Age Almanac* (1991), pp. 9-12. Fetzer reproduced the “Great Invocation” in both of his genealogical works, *One Man’s Family* (1964), pp. 188-89; and *The Men from Wengen and America’s Agony* (1971), p. 415.

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men —
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

(www.lucistrust.org/the_great_invocation)

Although published well before the *Unfinished Autobiography*, Fetzer apparently read Mrs. Bailey's most famous text, *Initiation Human and Solar* (1922), after 1959, the date of the reprint in his library. Seen by Alice Bailey as an expansion of the work of Madame Blavatsky and *The Secret Doctrine*,²⁶ *Initiation Human and Solar* reiterates the notion of the universe revolving around a great central sun (God), which radiates "energy or force" throughout the universe by means of a myriad of "transmitters," which we know as stars or suns. So too she expands the notion of the universe presided over by a series of nested hierarchies of spiritual beings who direct these energies in an effort to suffuse all with higher consciousness (also known as "Christ consciousness"). Bailey goes on to assert that our solar system is ruled by its own hierarchy of twelve spiritual beings who, in turn, rule over a similar hierarchy for each planet. These are the Masters, who, roughly divided between east and west,

²⁶ Bailey (1959), pp. vi, 7, 22, 58, 220, 225 (Fetzer underlinings).

are currently guiding the evolution of mankind to higher levels of consciousness by the channeling of divine energies. Most of these Masters, such as Morya, Kuthumi, and Djwhal Khul, had already been introduced to the world by Blavatsky, but it was left to Bailey to specify their exact places and duties within the Planetary Hierarchy ruling earth.²⁷

It was the Master Kuthumi who initially put Alice Bailey on the path to discipleship under Djwhal Khul, and it was this idea that “average humanity of all degrees” could be called to serve the Masters, first as disciples and then as initiates, that interested Fetzer greatly. As Fetzer carefully noted, many of the Masters resided in far-away places such as Shamballa (a secret city in the Gobi desert) or in the mountain fastnesses of the Himalayas, while others, notably Master Jesus, St. Germain, Hilarion, and Master P. were said to be active in Europe and North America. Indeed, Fetzer noted that it was Hilarion who first promoted Spiritualism and psychical research, that it was Master P. who promoted New Thought, and that it was St. Germain, under the name of Master Rakoczi, who led the Freemasons. The fact that John Fetzer was already active in some of these groups perhaps encouraged him to think that he, too, may someday be called by the Masters to enter the Path of Discipleship. Bailey gave added life to this hope through her observation that while “a large number of the initiates and those who have obtained adeptship in the last cycle, have been orientals, ... the time now comes when a period of attainment by occidentals will be seen, ... [attainment] suited to their type of mind.”²⁸ What she

²⁷ Bailey (1959), chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 (Fetzer underlinings).

²⁸ Bailey (1959), pp. 49, 50-62, 98-99, 105, 182-183 (Fetzer underlinings).

meant by “their type of mind” greatly excited Fetzer, judging by his exuberant marks on this page (see figure 3):

It is interesting to note that the oriental type attains its objective through meditation, with a modicum of executive organization and ritual, and that the occidental will achieve largely through the organization which the lower mind produces, and a type of meditation of which intense business concentration might be considered an illustration. The one-pointed application of the mind by a European or American business man might be regarded as a type of meditation. In the purification of motive lying back of this application will come, for the occidental, his day of opportunity [for initiation as a disciple].²⁹

Of course, “one-pointed application of mind” is only the beginning: one must also prove purity of motive. As in the “I AM” Religious Activity, Bailey specifies that for the successful businessman, this meant understanding “the occult value of money in service,” that is, its use not for oneself but “as a means to bring about the fruition of the Master’s plans as he senses those plans.” For, “Only he who desires naught for himself can be a recipient of financial bounty, and a dispenser of the riches of the universe. In other cases where riches increase they bring with them naught but sorrow and distress, discontent and misuse.”³⁰

Having thus established that discipleship was a real possibility, even for western businessmen, much of the rest of *Initiation Human and Solar* is given over to detailed discussions of the various steps through which the successful aspirant, once he has proven himself, is inducted into the Great White Brotherhood of the Masters. Fetzer read this material carefully. Much of what followed undoubtedly reminded Fetzer strongly of Freemasonry since it involved rising from a lower Blue Lodge to the higher White Lodge through a series of secret initiations. Like Freemasonry, these

²⁹ Bailey (1959), pp. 182-84 (Fetzer underlinings).

³⁰ Bailey (1959), pp. 78-79 (Fetzer underlinings).

initiations entailed the memorization of copious secret teachings (an “Esoteric Catechism” is provided); the spiritual understanding of a variety of esoteric symbols (prominent among which was the triangle); the giving of the secret word (AUM); and the memorization of complex rituals employing oaths and sacred implements (the “rods of power”).³¹ It was “thus by a graded series of steps” that “the initiate [is] brought face to face with Truth and Existence, leading to three “basic realisations”: “faith for ages is justified” and doubt banished; “the immortality of the soul and the unseen worlds is ... proven and ascertained”; and the realization of “the meaning and source of energy,” which can then allow one “to wield power with scientific accuracy and direction.”³² As a summary of John Fetzer’s spiritual goals, this list could hardly be bettered.

Baird T. Spalding

Of equal importance to the works of Alice Bailey for John Fetzer, was Baird T. Spalding’s *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, the first volume of which was published in 1924 and the fifth and last in 1955.³³ So impressed was Fetzer that after reading these volumes he contacted the publisher Douglas K. DeVorss for more

³¹ Bailey (1959), p. 50 and chapters 7 through 19 with the Esoteric Catechism following (Fetzer underlinings).

³² Bailey (1959), pp. 118-19 (Fetzer underlinings).

³³ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, 5 volumes (1924] 1937, [1927] 1944, 1935, 1948, 1955). A sixth volume of miscellaneous material by and about Spalding was published by DeVorss in 1996. An indication of just how important Spalding’s writings were for Fetzer is the “John E. Fetzer Foundation Preamble,” a.k.a. the “Spalding Memorandum,” dated September 9, 1973, in which Fetzer excerpted material from Spalding’s five volumes and asked the Fetzer Foundation Board members to comment (TB 30 [Broadcasting 1973 III]: “John E. Fetzer Foundation Preamble” [September 9, 1973] [R0214608]); a compilation of board members’ replies can be found in FI 19 [Fetzer, John E.—Replies to Spalding Memorandum Nov. 21, 1973]: “Compilation of Replies to Spalding Memorandum” [R0213368]]. See also James Keating Oral History (April 28, 2011), p. 40.

information about Spalding. He was disappointed, however: DeVorss was dead by 1953, and his company could supply very little concrete information about the author or his claims.³⁴ Baird himself said variously that he was born in England or India, and that he graduated from the University of Calcutta at the age of seventeen. After further education in the United States and Germany, he was invited in 1894 to form part of an eleven-man team sent by an Ivy-League university to the remote regions of Persia, India, Tibet, China (specifically the Gobi Desert), there to conduct archaeological and philological research.³⁵

While in the Himalayas, the team reportedly was introduced to the Masters. The Masters then proceeded to teach them profound spiritual truths by allowing them to translate ancient religious texts preserved on precious gold tablets, and by demonstrating to them phenomenal psychic powers and fantastic new technologies. The Masters told Spalding that soon the “great Law” of the “Christ Consciousness” or “I AM” necessary for the further spiritual evolution of mankind “will be brought forth in America” in preparation for “the New Age.”³⁶ Spurred by this declaration, Spalding returned to the United States and began to speak and write about his experiences (a mining engineer by trade, Spalding was Guy and Edna Ballard’s houseguest in Chicago

³⁴ See title page of Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, volume 5 (1955), where Fetzer underlined DeVorss’ name, adding “Douglas K.” and writing, “He is gone. Ma2-6639. Mr. Andrus now in charge.” Apparently this was not the first time that the publisher was asked to supply further information: in later editions a Publisher’s Note was inserted disclaiming any further knowledge of Spalding or his claims. A somewhat debunking biography of Spalding was published in 1954: Bruton, *Baird T. Spalding As I Knew Him* (1954) and subsequently picked up for re-publication by DeVorss in 1980; it is not known whether Fetzer read this biography. For a more recent appraisal of Spalding and his work, see Horowitz, *Occult America* (2009), pp. 192-204.

³⁵ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, p. 7; Volume 5, p. 23; Volume 6, p. 17.

³⁶ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 22, 143, 157.

during the early 1920s). In the wake of Spalding's involvement with a San Francisco-based New Thought group called The Comforter League of Light, a privately published version of the first volume of *Life and Teachings* became popular among metaphysical circles in the West and Midwest, after which the 1924 DeVorss edition launched it to even greater fame, followed by three more books in the series (volume was a posthumous production). In between his mining ventures, Spalding continued to lecture on his supposed encounters with the Masters and their spiritual philosophy until his death in 1953.³⁷

It is easy to see why Fetzer was so taken by Baird Spalding's *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*. Written like an adventure story with plenty of action, *Life and Teachings* is replete with lost cities, mysterious ancient texts, and exciting encounters with bandits and abominable snowmen.³⁸ It is also, however, one of the most engaging and enduringly popular introductions to a wide range of Theosophically inspired teachings available. Almost every page of Fetzer's copies of volumes 1, 2, 4 and 5 bear his annotations and underlinings, and it is clear that he read and re-read the books several times. From the time he read them in the late 1950s, Spalding's books became a crucial resource for the development of Fetzer's spiritual worldview.

Like the "I AM" materials and the teachings of Alice Bailey's Arcane School, Baird's work is premised on the basic Theosophical ideas of a monistic cosmos in which God, the "Universal Mind" suffuses his energy (the "Universal Mind Substance,"

³⁷ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 6, pp. 14-15; *The History of the "I AM" Activity* (2003), pp. 1-2.

³⁸ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 77-79; Volume 2, pp. 19-21.

sometimes referred to as *prana* or “life force”) throughout all, including mankind; and that a divine hierarchy of reclusive Masters (the “Great White Brotherhood”) uses this energy to direct the spiritual evolution of humanity through successive reincarnations towards higher consciousness (the “Christ Consciousness”). Too, throughout the volumes of *Life and Teachings*, Jesus plays a prominent role as “the Great Master and Teacher” of mankind, although much in the Theosophical mold. Indeed, at one point, Spalding and his colleagues are treated to an audience with Jesus in the flesh, who tells them of his travels to the far East as a young man where he studied at the feet of the ancient Masters (this reconstruction of Jesus’ lost years closely echoes the 1907 *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, reportedly channeled from the Akashic records by the Illinois Disciples minister, Levi Dowling).³⁹ Thus, as both Jesus and the other Masters never tire of telling Spalding’s expedition, Jesus’ mission was not to remit sins (the mistaken teaching of the Apostles), but to preach the immutable “Law” that God is one and all is God. Once human beings realize this through the practice of “silence” (meditation), they will recognize the “Christ Consciousness” or “I AM” within, after which God’s power will flow through them and all things will be possible.⁴⁰

As in the “I AM” Religious Activity and to a lesser extent, Alice Bailey’s Arcane School, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East* also prophesied a leading role for the United States in the work ahead, a theme in which John Fetzer was always

³⁹ Later in life, Fetzer was well acquainted with this work; his well-marked copy was Levi, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* ([1907] 1987). For more on Dowling and his midwestern roots, see Buescher, *Aquarian Evangelist* (2008).

⁴⁰ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 15-25, 34-42; Volume 2, pp. 5, 7-16, 14ff; Volume 4, pp. 174- 85.

keenly interested. On the 4th of July during the first year of the expedition, the Master Emil treated Spalding's group to a peroration on America's divine mission. According to Emil, it was God who guided Columbus and Pilgrim Puritans to the New World, and it was God who, through his "Universal Mind Substance," inspired the Declaration of Independence, the signing of which was "one of the greatest epochs since that of the advent of Jesus into the world." Indeed, the two events are intimately related in their sacredness: "[c]annot those that signed the Declaration of Independence that day, be likened unto the Wise Men from the East who saw the Star symbolizing the birth of the Babe in the Manger, the Christ Consciousness in man?" Isn't the very motto *e pluribus unum* the perfect expression of the Christ Consciousness, the idea that all is one with God? In time, "with the Christ Consciousness fully developed in [the] nation, whatever is undertaken by it, or by its people, must work out for the good of all; for the very root or heart of all government is the consciousness of those governed." Emil assured his listeners that this process has already started: on the day the Founding Fathers first struck the Liberty Bell, the "bell magnified and sent out the vibrations" of the Christ Consciousness, "until some day they will penetrate the deepest and darkest corners of the whole earth, and thus enlighten the darkest consciousness." America, according to Emil, is thus the capstone of the evolution of nations, and "while [g]reat mistakes have been made by your nation," its destiny is guided by "great souls," and "[w]hen your nation does recognize its true estate, or mission, and joins hands with the Spirit ... we can see for your great nation a marvel far transcending the power of any human tongue to describe."⁴¹

⁴¹ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 64-71.

It should also be noted that in addition to the Theosophical framework, much of the language in *Life and Teachings* reflects that of the “mind-over-matter” thinking reminiscent of the New Thought and Christian Science movements that had developed out of Mesmerism and of which Fetzer was well aware.⁴² For example, as one of the Masters tells Spalding, “Through the power or process of thought we can transmute and evolve our bodies, or our outer conditions and surroundings, through recognition of this Christ Consciousness within ourselves, so that we will never experience death nor any change called death. This is done wholly through man's power to visualize, idealize, conceive, and bring forth that which he gazes upon.” Thus, while “[f]ear thoughts, pain thoughts, and grief thoughts create the ugliness of old age,” “[j]oyous thoughts, love thoughts, and ideal thoughts create the beauty called youth.” Indeed, by nightly affirmation that “divine Love in demonstration is eternal youth,” one’s “inner alchemist” will cause the body’s “dead and worn out cells to fall, and the gold of new skin to appear with perpetual health and loveliness.” Since the body is fundamentally a microcosm reflecting the cosmos, all one needs is a positive attitude to channel the healing rays from God, the great “central sun” of the universe.⁴³

It is possible, too, that Fetzer recognized in such pronouncements Teslean themes. For once the power of thought is realized, the Masters claimed, adepts will command extraordinary psychic abilities and enjoy enormous inspiration and creativity, which in turn will lead to great advances in science and technology

⁴² Spalding was a student of New Thought, and the first volume of *The Life and Teachings* was serialized in a San Francisco New Thought magazine, *The Comforter* (see www.bairdtsalding.org/, accessed July 27, 2016).

⁴³ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 30, 32, 62; Volume 3, pp. 69-81; Volume 4, p. 152.

(perhaps Fetzner wondered if that was Tesla's secret).⁴⁴ Moreover, as human beings learn to tap into "Universal Power," it will be available to "turn and move every mechanical device, furnish transportation without consumption of fuel in any way, and will also furnish light and heat." This indeed would be confirmation of Tesla's dream, for the Universal Power "will be everywhere present without money or price, and can be contacted and used by all."⁴⁵

Finally, as the foregoing indicates, Baird Spalding's *Life and Teachings* made it clear that there was no fundamental conflict between science and religion, once it is correctly understood that spiritual laws are complementary to natural laws. As Emil's mother puts it, "You will find that in the spiritual there is a higher law, and when you abide by that law, you will receive benefit; for the spiritual is just above and around the mechanical or material." However, despite this, spiritual law is every bit as scientific, and "[y]ou will find there is no more mystery in the spiritual than there is in the mechanical or the material." This is because all is energy, and the only difference between physical energy and spiritual is the rate of vibration, something which, according to Spalding, is only now coming to be grasped in the West through Quantum Theory. Of course, since all energy is essentially Mind, it is also true that all energy is conscious and responds to the fundamental law of the cosmos, the Law of

⁴⁴ Judging by the "Spalding Memorandum." Fetzner was especially interested in the "camera of past events," which Spalding said he was developing in collaboration with Edison and Steinmetz (Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 5, pp. 14, 23-29).

⁴⁵ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 1, pp. 73-74, see also 152-53; Volume 2, pp. 28-29, 41.

Love. This is an idea that would also become a fundamental conviction for John Fetzer.⁴⁶

The Impact of Theosophy on John Fetzer

In considering the elements that went into the creation of John Fetzer's later worldview, it is hard to overestimate the impact of Theosophy in its various forms. Beginning in the 1930s, when Fetzer first encountered Theosophy, until the end of his life, Theosophical or Theosophically inspired literature continued to be some of his favorite reading.⁴⁷ Fetzer did encounter in Spiritualism, Freemasonry, Hermeticism, and Rosicrucianism many of the spiritual ideas that he found so attractive: a monistic cosmos comprised of conscious energy; the body as microcosm; the reality of psychic powers and the possibility of scientific discovery of spiritual laws; karma and reincarnation; the continuing centrality of Jesus; ancient wisdom from past civilizations; the divine destiny of the United States under the watchful eye of a brotherhood of secret masters; the harmony of science and religion; and impending global spiritual transformation leading to the New Age.⁴⁸ Of all the ancient wisdom traditions, however, it was Theosophy that wove these concepts and themes together into a comprehensive cosmic mythology that Fetzer found uniquely compelling and through which everything he learned subsequently would be filtered and judged.

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⁴⁶ Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the East*, Volume 2, p. 29; Volume 3, pp. 70-71; Volume 4, pp. 142-57, 186-96; Volume 5, pp. 47-54, 61-62.

⁴⁷ For example, Bruce Fetzer, remembers studying the Theosophically-inspired Tuella 1981) with his great uncle in 1981 (Bruce Fetzer Oral History, [March 14, 1996] p. 38).

⁴⁸ Many of these themes appear in both of Fetzer's extended philosophical statements in *One Man's Family* (1964), pp. 180-97 and *The Men From Wengen and America's Agony* (1971), pp. 375-416.

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